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C O N F I D E N T I A L MASERU 000168

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FOR AF/S - STEVE HILL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 3/20/2017
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [ZI](#) [LT](#)
SUBJECT: LESOTHO: ZIMBABWE DEMARCHE DELIVERED

REF: STATE 34008 AND PREVIOUS

CLASSIFIED BY: June Carter Perry, Ambassador, EXEC , STATE.
REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

11. (C) Ambassador delivered reftel points to Acting Foreign Minister Dr. Phooko March 20 and reviewed with him the Secretary's statement as well as the spokesman's remarks on the

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issue. We also went through key points related to the treatment of the opposition by the Mugabe government, the abuse of human rights and the need for Lesotho and other members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to issue a public statement as well as to act on the matter as expeditiously as possible. The Minister responded that this was an issue that the Government of Lesotho was aware of and that it remained under discussion at this point. He alluded to the fact that the SADC Council of Ministers was to begin March 21 in Maseru and that would cast additional light on Lesotho in its role as SADC Chair. Minister Phooko, currently the Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, said that because of issues related to a current strike in Lesotho, the Cabinet had been very much occupied with trying to handle the economic and security aspects over the the past few days, and therefore had not had the opportunity to address the Zimbabwe issue in-depth at this point. He did commit the government to further in-depth discussion where specific actions would be reviewed. Post will provide these as soon as possible, likely after the current domestic political crisis is resolved.

PERRY